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[redacted] 3.5(c)

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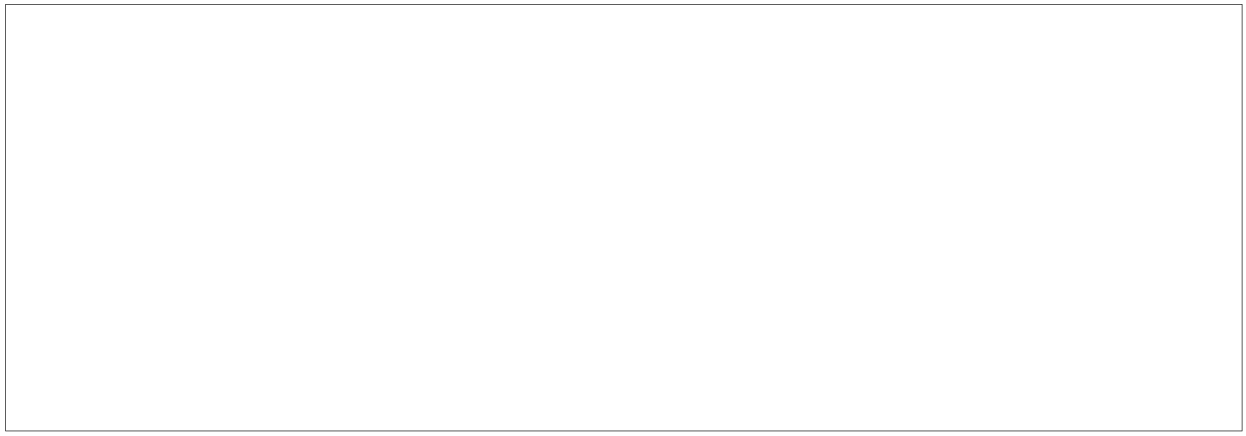

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ARGENTINA: Human Rights Issue

3.5(c) The Argentine government faces growing international and domestic protests over missing or arbitrarily detained persons.

3.5(c) Within the last few months, several foreign nationals have been arrested and charged with subversive political activity. Some have simply disappeared without explanation. Most diplomatic attempts to gain their release or even information on their status have failed.

3.5(c) A US priest arrested last week has been denied consular access depite a protest note from the US embassy. The West German, Italian, and Cuban embassies have tried in vain to obtain information on missing nationals.

3.5(c) Only the Israeli government has been successful in freeing some of its nationals, and that only after persistent protests brought the intervention of top Argentine officials.

3.5(c) Until recently, the Argentine public, anxious for an end to terrorism, has generally accepted the need for the government's arbitrary countersubversion policy. Now, military leaders are facing increasing pressure to settle the cases of dozens of detained Peronist labor and political leaders, and popular concern is growing for the hundreds of individuals who have been detained or have disappeared without a trace since the military take-over in March.

3.5(c) One of those detained was former president General Alejandro Lanusse. The military recently placed him under five days "disciplinary arrest" for criticizing the government's treatment of a university professor who served as Lanusse's education minister and who was accused of Marxist sympathies.

3.5(c) It is unlikely that either domestic or international pressure will move military leaders to put effective brakes on the counterterrorist campaign. Violence that has for years plagued Argentine society was a primary factor in the downfall of the five previous governments. Now that some progress is being made against organized terrorists, human rights considerations are not likely to deter security officials from their efforts to restore public order. 3.5(c)

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